



## **Funding Opportunity Notice**

### **Urban and Community Forestry Program South Carolina Forestry Commission**

#### **2022 Information Package**

This Funding Opportunity Notice is incorporated into any cooperative agreement administered by the South Carolina Forestry Commission under the Urban and Community Forestry Program. Please retain a copy for your records to reference for all aspects of your cooperative agreement, activities, reimbursements, and reporting.

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## **I. OVERVIEW**

The mission of the South Carolina Forestry Commission (SCFC) is to protect, promote, enhance, and nurture the forest lands of South Carolina in a manner consistent with achieving the greatest good for its citizens. Responsibilities extend to all forest lands, both rural and urban, and to all associated forest values and amenities including, but not limited to, timber, wildlife, water quality, air quality, soil protection, recreation, and aesthetics.

The thirteen priority issues identified in South Carolina's 2020-2030 Forest Action Plan are water quality and quantity, stormwater management, prescribed burning, emerging markets, wildfire risk, forest regulation, forest health threats, air quality, fragmentation and parcelization, population growth, climate change, public perceptions about forestry, and community forests in South Carolina. Urban Forestry is incorporated to some extent in these priority areas.

As part of the South Carolina Forestry Commission 2021 Forest Action Plan, SCFC established the goal of providing technical, educational, and financial assistance in urban and community forestry to local governments. SCFC administers the Urban and Community Forestry program to further this goal. SCFC will fund projects at SCFC discretion when the project meets the goals and objectives established by the strategic plan.

For the 2021 funding program, the SCFC is instituting a two-part process. The first part entails communities filling out a self-assessment tool online and submitting the results to SCFC. This assessment will be used to identify local needs for technical and programmatic support. Once this assessment is completed, applicants will receive a response on what assistance they may best benefit from receiving. They will then be invited to apply for that assistance in addition to their current requests for support (within the fundable program categories). To be eligible for selection for funding from SCFC, applicants must complete the Self-Assessment tool (Part I) and the full grant application (Part II), if requested after the completion of the tool. The Self-Assessment tool can be completed in less than 20 minutes.

### **Program Authority**

Federal support to the South Carolina Urban and Community Forestry Program is authorized by the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-313) as amended. The program operates as a cooperative partnership between SCFC and USDA Forest Service, Southern Region.

### **Program Eligibility**

SCFC funds may be awarded to any unit of local or state government that completes the Self-Assessment Tool described below **and** submits a project reviewed and approved for funding by SCFC

## **II. FUNDING PROCESS**

### **Available Funds**

SCFC has approximately \$301,340 available to fund eligible projects (this funding comes from SCFC's yearly allocation of Urban Forestry funding from USDA as well as funding made available through the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act). SCFC priority for this funding cycle is to fund projects that will produce maximum impact and contribute significantly to the management and protection of urban forests. Requests for assistance must have a minimum project amount of \$15,000. Communities will be required to complete the Self-Assessment Tool (described below) before being asked to submit a full application and will be encouraged to use the Technical Assistance to Communities services (at no additional costs to communities, also described below). Funding is for programs, projects or activities not currently being funded and

cannot be used to substitute for existing funds. Funds may be used within existing programs to initiate new program development or program expansion. **Entertainment, food and beverages, computers, tree maintenance, or construction and landscape supplies/equipment are unallowable costs under the SCFC program and may not be used for match funding.**

### **Part I - Self-Assessment Tool**

Before submitting a full application, applicants will be required to submit the Urban Forest Self-Assessment Tool. The tool consists of a series of questions that will be used to determine the current state of Urban Forestry plans and programs within the community and the existing needs for urban forest mapping, planning or management. The assessment will assist the SCFC and the community to determine the projects that will best target identified needs. Several of the needs identified in the assessment can be met by requesting pro bono support from the Green Infrastructure Center (GIC) which is providing ongoing technical assistance through a cooperative agreement with SCFC. This additional technical assistance will be provided to communities at no additional cost. **GIC will not be permitted to bid on or perform any contracted work resulting from any technical assistance provided through this project.**

The tool is available at [Community Self-Assessment Tool for Technical Support from South Carolina Forestry Commission Survey \(surveymonkey.com\)](https://survey.monkey.com/survey/organization/scfc-urban-forest-self-assessment-tool). **For those unable access the form online, please contact [fwaite@scfc.gov](mailto:fwaite@scfc.gov) for an emailed copy of the form. Download the form, fill it in and save the file and then send as an email attachment to the SCFC. Forms can also be mailed to the SCFC (see page 8 for contact information). The assessment is intended to indicate where there may be gaps in local urban and community forestry programs and must be filled in and submitted before sending a full application for funding.**

Once selected for funding, technical assistance through GIC may be provided for needs such as (but not limited to):

- **Canopy Mapping:** Canopy maps and plantable area maps including help for canopy goal setting.
- **Tree Planting Plans:** Use recent canopy maps and plantable area maps to determine where and how to plan trees where they are most needed.
- **Tree Inventories:** A field-based assessment of tree location, size, species, condition and needs.
- **Tree Tracking and Budgeting:** Use canopy maps and inventory to plan for funding an urban forest planting plan.
- **Urban Forest Management Plans:** A detailed plan for how to care for the urban forest including staffing, equipment, planting and tree care and steps to achieve goals, for example, a canopy goal.
- **Making the Case for Trees:** Use existing tree canopy maps to calculate ecosystem services such as air quality and carbon sequestration. Can also include stormwater uptake calculator or help with outreach and engagement strategies.
- **Emergency Forest/Storm Planning:** Planning for how to prepare the urban forest for storms, pre-contracting for debris removal and clean-up and recovery plans and urban waste wood re-use.

- **Tree Risk Assessment:** Prepare for and reduce prevalence of risk-prone trees, flag trees or limbs for removal or further monitoring.

In addition, the assessment tool may reveal the need for new urban forest management plans, tree inventories, tree risk assessments, tree mapping apps or other tools that can be requested for support from the SCFC. This assessment serves as a form of “pre-application” for project funding from SCFC.

## **Part II: Invitation to Apply for Funding**

After review of the Self-Assessment Tool, your community may be invited to apply for a cooperative subaward agreement. This determination will be made after review of the Self-Assessment Tool and after consultation with your staff.

For example, you find you need a new canopy map, and you want to work on a management plan. You may be offered free technical support for the map and (based on the results of the Self-Assessment Tool review) you may be offered funding to hire a management plan consultant.

## **Matching Contributions**

If selected for funding during the Part II process, communities must provide twenty percent of the funded project total in matching funds (for example, if a project total is \$20,000, SCFC will provide \$16,000, and the community must provide \$4,000). Match may be in the form of cash (such as staff time) or *in-kind contributions* (from 3<sup>rd</sup> party donation of goods and services), and all such contributions must come from non-Federal sources. Matching funds for this project may not be used as a match for any other Federal cost-share project. All matching funds must be specifically related to the proposed project. Documentation of all matching support must be maintained and submitted with reimbursement.

**Cash Purchases** are direct, out-of-pocket expenditures for eligible project activities that are supported by paid invoices, cancelled checks, signed receipts or official payroll records. Cash match must be associated with a specific project budget cost.

**In-Kind Contributions** are third party donations of services, supplies or equipment, including the value of time (including fringe benefits) and equipment spent by volunteers on eligible project activities. Rates for volunteers performing tasks the same as their normal line of work are calculated at their current job rate. Rates for volunteers performing activities that are not the same as their normal line of work shall value the work as established below. Assistance provided by Federal employees, South Carolina Forestry Commission, or Green Infrastructure Center employees **may not** be claimed as part of the local match.

### **In-Kind Matching Guidelines**

- Volunteer Services – equivalent to salary and benefits paid to applicant staff performing similar work, or rates paid to individual performing equivalent services in the local labor market. For donated professional services – use customary rates for services provided
- Donations of materials – use customary fair market value rates
- Equipment – use established rates per hour, per mile, or fair market value for rental or leasing
- Vehicle mileage – \$0.62.5mile (current state standard mileage rate, business use)

## **Indirect Costs**

Indirect costs are eligible for reimbursement under the program. The indirect cost rate may be a rate negotiated and approved by the subrecipient’s cognizant Federal agency for indirect costs. If the subrecipient does not have a Federal indirect cost rate, SCFC may negotiate an indirect cost rate with the subrecipient that complies with 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E or the subrecipient may

elect to use the 10% de minimis indirect cost rate described at 2 CFR 200.414(f) if the entity is eligible.

### **Ownership of Equipment and Supplies Purchased with Program or Match Funds**

Unless otherwise specified, title and ownership of all equipment and supplies vests with the subrecipient throughout their useful life span, to be used *exclusively* for activities related to the project or for other activities consistent with the goals and objectives of the Urban and Community Forestry Program. If these conditions cannot be met, the subrecipient must reimburse SCFC the fair market value equivalent to SCFC percentage contribution to the project.

### **Ineligible Expenses for Reimbursement or Match**

- Expenses incurred *before or after* the agreement period
- Any expense not part of an *approved* budget
- Food, drinks and refreshments for meetings, volunteers, etc. (cannot count as match)
- Costs associated with *preparing* the application
- Salaries of current staff, although they **may** qualify as match if they are working on direct project activities – SCFC will evaluate this match on a case-by-case basis
- General overhead and administration charges
- Expenses not supported by proper documentation (such as paid receipts, invoices, etc.)
- Shrubs, flowers or groundcovers, although they may qualify as match, if approved
- Costs associated with regular and persistent tree maintenance
- Purchase of construction and landscape supplies/equipment
- Purchase of computers

### **Program Income**

Income from agreement-supported activities (such as **workshop registration fees**, revenues from the sale of publications, royalties, etc.) must be included in the budget and applied to achievement of the project (i.e., spent to support a budget cost). The most common type of program income is excess workshop registration fees where funds are used to defray workshop costs (speaker fees, room rental, educational handouts, etc.).

[In cases where a profit is realized from an agreement-supported activity, subrecipients must report to SCFC the amount of profit and apply it directly to the SCFC-funded project, reducing the overall amount, or toward another SCFC-eligible activity. Should this situation occur, contact the administrator to discuss options.]

Please consult 2 CFR 200.307 for further guidance on program income.

### **Timeline**

SCFC subrecipients will be given 12 months to complete their project. Approved projects may begin only after agreement forms are signed and submitted by the subrecipient and a fully executed agreement is returned to the subrecipient by SCFC.

- **December 9, 2022** – Part I Self-Assessment Tool Submission Deadline. The Self-Assessment Tool must be received by 5:00 P.M. via email to [fwaite@scfc.gov](mailto:fwaite@scfc.gov).
- **December 2022 through January 2023** – Part II Full Application Request. All applicants will be formally notified of the outcome of the review of the Self-Assessment Tool. Following notification, applicants will be provided instructions and deadlines for submitting the full application.

- **Cooperative Agreements Issued** - After review and acceptance of the full applications, agreements will be developed and sent to those organizations selected for funding. Agreements are to be signed and returned within 20 days of receipt.
- **February – March 2023 (approximate)** – Begin Project. Agreement Period scheduled to begin.
- **One year after project commencement** – End Project. Agreement Period ends. No further work can be carried out for the project unless a time extension has been previously approved. Submissions of the Final Accomplishment Report and the Final Request for Reimbursement are due within 15 days of the agreement end date, or approved time extension deadline.

### III. PROJECT EXAMPLES

- **Canopy Mapping:** Canopy maps and plantable areas maps including help for canopy goal setting.
- **Tree Planting Plans:** Use recent canopy maps and plantable areas to determine where and how to plan trees where they are most needed.
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### IV. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

#### **Cooperative Agreement Requirements**

Subrecipients must comply with all applicable state and federal regulations. Project records must: (1) comply with generally accepted accounting principles; (2) document allowable costs; (3) be supported by source documentation such as canceled checks, paid bills, payrolls, time and attendance records, general ledgers, project ledgers, and contracts; and be **maintained for 3 years** following the end of the agreement period.

Each organization applying for funds will undergo a risk assessment evaluation. In accordance with 2 CFR 200.332, SCFC must determine the ability of the subrecipient to comply with federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the sub-award agreement. Some factors to be considered by SCFC during this risk assessment include:

1. SCFC prior experience with subrecipient (i.e. on-time reports, accurate invoicing, communication)
2. Results of previous site visits or audits
3. New or frequently changing personnel and/or substantially changed internal control systems
4. Extent and results of any prior federal awarding agency monitoring, debarment, suspension or delinquency on federal debt

Organizations deemed at-risk by SCFC may still receive funding. However, SCFC is authorized to impose special conditions on high risk subrecipients as listed in 2 CFR 200.208. Examples of special conditions may include additional measures for project monitoring, and/or more detailed or frequent financial reporting.

### **Reporting Requirements**

January 15 and July 30 – Status Reports due. The January report covers agreement activities from beginning of subrecipient agreement up to December 31. The June report covers activities from January 1 through June 30.

Final Accomplishment Report and the Final Request for Reimbursement are due by a date established by SCFC in the Award Agreement.

### **Unique Entity Identifier**

All subrecipients are required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to receive SCFC funds. Complete instructions on obtaining this UEI number may be found at <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

SCFC will evaluate the proposed projects for technical merit and will perform a budget analysis prior to awarding funding.

### **Payment Process**

SCFC payments are made on a **reimbursement basis**. Subrecipients must file a request for reimbursement; submit documentation/records for all SCFC-funded expenditures, all cash and all in-kind matches prior to payment, including salary and time reports. The funds being requested for reimbursement must be accompanied by at least an equal amount of match. Up to 4 reimbursements may be claimed throughout the agreement. SCFC will withhold payment until adequate documentation has been submitted to support SCFC and match expenditures.

### **Acknowledgement Letters**

All approved subrecipients will be required to compose and send a letter to their respective US Representative and both South Carolina Senators. The letter should acknowledge receipt of the SCFC funds as part of the Farm Bill from the US Forest Service, administered by SCFC, and stress the importance of the funds in helping local communities develop or expand their urban forestry programs and managing their urban forests in a sustainable, productive manner.

The names and addresses of current US Representatives can be found at the web site – <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/> and current Senators can be found at the web site – <http://www.senate.gov/>.

Full Proposal Instructions will be provided to those communities selected for funding after completion and evaluation of the Self-Assessment Tool by SCFC.



## V. CONTACT INFORMATION AND SUBMISSIONS

**For additional information about this program, contact the Urban Forestry Staff:**

Frances Waite  
Urban Forestry Program Coordinator  
South Carolina Forestry Commission  
5500 Broad River Road  
Columbia, SC 29212  
E-mail: [fwaite@scfc.gov](mailto:fwaite@scfc.gov)  
Office Phone: 803-896-8864

The SCFC Self-Assessment Tool may be accessed at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7NZXK7Q>

**Visit our website to obtain copies of this document, project ideas and appropriate forms:**

<http://www.state.sc.us/forest/urban.htm>

**SCFC WILL ONLY ACCEPT ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF YOUR ASSESMENT TOOL!**  
**Tool must be submitted by email no later than Friday, December 9, 2022, at 5 PM ET**  
**Please send to [fwaite@scfc.gov](mailto:fwaite@scfc.gov)**

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